
NEWS From:

Congressman Mike Honda

FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA



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Honda Tours San Jose Airport, Meets with Airport Officials, Passengers

San Jose, CA— After a briefing today by San Jose Airport Director, Ralph Tonseth on the latest security measures being taken at San Jose International Airport, U.S. Congressman Mike Honda (D-San Jose), a member of the Aviation Subcommittee in the U.S. House of Representatives, toured the airport to view the new security procedures firsthand and to speak with passengers about their concerns. In the Congress, Honda has proposed federalizing the security screeners at U.S. airports and supports U.S. Transportation Secretary Mineta's move to place U.S. Marshals on flights.

"San Jose Airport has done an exceptional job addressing passenger concerns and keeping me informed about the measures they are taking to keep our people safe," said Honda. **"Before returning to Washington to renew my efforts to enhance the safety, security and financial stability of our air civil aviation system I wanted to spend time with airport officials and passengers here at our local airport in San Jose to share their concerns."**

"The financial health of the airline industry affects the financial health of the nation's airports, including San Jose International," said San Jose International Airport Director of Aviation, Ralph Tonseth. **"We're committed to continuing to work with our business partners, legislators like Mike Honda and colleagues within the aviation industry to secure the financial viability of air travel and apply Silicon Valley technology to further enhance customer safety nationwide."**

When Congress reconvenes this Thursday it will consider several aviation measures supported by Congressman Honda, including the federalization of the security screeners at U.S. airports— a function currently paid for by the airlines and performed by private companies whose employees are often underpaid and insufficiently trained. Honda believes that airport security personnel should undergo a thorough federal background check in addition to being federally trained prior to being cleared to work.

Honda also supports the idea of providing an immediate federal relief package for U.S. airlines, who have suffered great losses over the past week— the exact figures of this proposal have not been made public. The House Committee on Transportation, of which Honda is a member, is scheduled to hold a hearing on the airline relief package tomorrow, Wednesday September 19, 2000. Other proposals that Honda supports that may be considered by the House, include enhancing the security of cockpit doors and increasing the number of plainclothes federal agents on flights. Debate on these measures could begin as early as this Thursday.

After the briefing, Honda walked through the airport, greeting passengers and viewing the security procedures being implemented. Honda stopped often to speak with air travelers about their questions and concerns. Over the past several days Honda has visited with religious leaders of all faiths, community leaders and students at Pioneer High School in San Jose and Santa Clara University to respond to questions and remain in touch with the thoughts and concerns of the people of San Jose in the aftermath of this national tragedy.